



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**GEORGIA**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Raising the Need for Early Detection

### Message is cornerstone for groups' collaborative efforts on breast health



Women in Kutaisi, Georgia, lead the Breast Health Awareness Walk after learning about early detection methods.

***"We taught many women the methods of breast cancer early detection that save lives," said Marika Davituliana of the USAID-funded Healthy Women in Georgia program.***

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Fear pervades people's thoughts when they hear about breast cancer, the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women worldwide. When breast cancer is diagnosed late (which is often the case in Georgia), the prospects are grim. The key to survival is early detection, which comes about through community awareness and access to clinical care.

In less than one week, USAID reached over 1,800 Georgians with messages about breast health and early detection through a breast health conference and an awareness walk.

The conference, which brought together 115 practitioners from a range of organizations working to improve breast health, gave participants an opportunity to share best practices, and learn about topics such as screening and early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and community engagement. Organizations began to pave a path toward more local and international partnerships, which will allow them to reach a wider audience and make a greater impact.

Later that week, in the city of Kutaisi, approximately 1,780 people attended an annual breast health awareness walk, with even more people hearing the key message through media coverage of the event. Participants received information about early detection and breast self-exam methods, marched together to raise awareness about breast health, and enjoyed a concert showcasing popular musicians. After the previous year's walk, the number of women who visited the local Women's Wellness Center for a clinical breast exam increased dramatically.

In addition to supporting the special events of that week, USAID is also working on a continuous basis to conduct educational sessions on breast health year-round, reaching 3,700 women in one year. In areas where USAID works, the percent of women who have conducted a breast self-exam almost doubled between 2002 and 2005 (increasing from 30% to 55%). Through these efforts, breast health concerns are being recognized earlier, leading to better outcomes and to healthier women in Georgia.